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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 4 March 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Once again, we are compelled to draw attention to the systematic violations of international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, that are being perpetrated against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The failure of the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, to seriously and effectively address these violations to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and end Israel's impunity and hold it accountable for the crimes of its military occupation has undoubtedly emboldened the occupying Power, as reflected in its intensifying violations and illegal policies that we continue to document and bring before the international community.

Indisputably, Palestinian children, who constitute nearly half of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, are bearing an immense impact from Israel's illegal policies and practices. Children continue to be shot and killed, many extrajudicially killed, by Israeli occupying forces. Hundreds of those not killed by Israel's arsenal of lethal weapons have been severely, and many permanently, maimed, while others are made homeless through Israel's continued practice of home demolitions, in a clear case of collective punishment, which is illegal under international law, in particular Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949). Even their right to education is severely obstructed as schools, many funded by the international community, are demolished or students are prevented from attending schools because of closures or harassment and violent attacks by Israeli terrorist settlers. It is not possible to list the violations of international law committed by the occupying Power against our children, who have spent every living moment of their young lives under occupation.

Just this past week, four more Palestinian children were killed by Israeli occupying forces, including two boys, age 17, who were shot and killed on 2 March

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2016, in the West Bank city of Nablus. In addition to the killing of these two boys, many have been attacked and injured by Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers. We call again on the international community to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to end its brutality and crimes against Palestinian children and call for an end to all of its policies and practices that especially place Palestinian children in harm's way.

The casualties among the entire Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, have continued to mount with no end in sight as Israel persists with its aggression with complete and utter impunity. It is in this connection that we report that the Palestinian Ministry of Health has documented that, since the beginning of October 2015, the Israeli occupying forces have now killed at least 185 Palestinians, including 41 children and 8 women, and have injured more than 15,200 Palestinians, many of whom will have to live the rest of their lives with long-term and irreparable trauma, as well as permanent disabilities.

Below are just some of the innumerable crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in the period since our last letter to you:

25 February 2016:

- A Palestinian child, Suhayb Saqir, age 5, was killed and his brother Musab, age 6, was seriously injured after unexploded Israeli ordnance detonated in the Jabaliya area of the northern Gaza Strip.

26 February 2016:

- A Palestinian boy, Mahmoud Mohammed Ali Sha'lan, age 17 and from the village of Deir Dibwan, was shot dead by Israeli occupying forces near the illegal settlement of "Beit El", north of Ramallah. The boy, who is also an American citizen, was shot with several rounds of live ammunition and left to bleed to death, a cruel fate many young Palestinians have suffered in such brutal attacks by occupying forces.

27 February 2016:

- Israeli navy boats opened fire on Palestinian fishermen's boats, which were sailing within the Israeli-imposed 6-nautical-mile fishing zone offshore from the north-west of Gaza City.
- Israeli occupying forces opened fire at Palestinian farmers and homes along the Gaza border.
- A group of illegal settlers rampaged the agricultural lands of Yusuf village near Salfit, under the protection of occupying forces who fired rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas grenades towards Palestinians who were attempting to prevent the attack by settlers.

28 February 2016:

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 10 Palestinians, including 2 brothers, both children, from across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Israeli navy boats and occupying forces opened fire on Palestinian fishermen and farmers offshore from the northern Gaza Strip.

- Israeli settlers resumed their provocative visits to Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Occupied East Jerusalem, provoking tension with Muslim worshippers.
- Occupying forces shot and seriously injured a Palestinian child, Yazan Omar Salah (age 16), with a live bullet to his chest, and a medical doctor, Hisham Atwan (age 45), in the village of Al-Khader, south of Bethlehem.
- A Palestinian farmer attempting to reach his farm in Gaza was injured when occupying forces opened fire at him.

29 February 2016:

- Israeli occupying forces detained 27 Palestinians, including a 2-year-old toddler, during predawn raids in the West Bank.
- Occupying forces demolished residential structures and tents sheltering Palestinian Bedouin families in the village of Al-Farisiya, in northern Jordan Valley.
- Israeli naval boats attacked Palestinian fishermen sailing within the Israeli-imposed 6-nautical-mile fishing zone offshore from Gaza.
- Occupying forces attacked and detained nine Palestinian fishermen on fishing boats offshore from Gaza.
- Occupying forces shot and injured a Palestinian east of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip.

1 March 2016:

- In a violent predawn raid, Israeli occupying forces entered Qalandia refugee camp to the north of East Jerusalem and opened fire at Palestinian civilians, killing Iyad Omar Sajdyeh (age 22) by sniper fire and injuring 10 others, including a child.
- Occupying forces detained 16 Palestinians, including a minor, from the West Bank.
- A group of terrorist settlers attacked and injured Ayman bin Shamseh near the town of Surif to the south of Nablus. Settlers also brutally attacked and injured Mahmoud Suleiman Awad Rizeq from the Askar refugee camp in Nablus.
- Occupying forces attacked and opened live fire on Palestinian fishermen offshore from Gaza, as well as farmers tending to their land in Gaza.
- Occupying forces demolished the family house of Yousef Abed Simrin, citing "unlicensed building" as a pretext. Yousef and his wife have seven children, ranging from 3 to 20, and are now displaced and homeless.
- Occupying forces brutally assaulted a Palestinian youth, Allam Shaer, after raiding his house in the town of Arraba, south-west of Jenin.

2 March 2016:

- Israeli occupying forces continued the widespread demolition of Palestinian properties. This included the demolition of dozens of structures in the village of Khirbet Tana, north-east of Nablus, including houses, barns and the village's sole school, which is a building consisting of movable caravans

donated by a European organization. The school was attended by 26 local children from grade 1 to grade 4.

- Occupying forces served demolition orders to Palestinian families in Khallet al-Mayyeh, a small village south of Al-Khalil, under the pretext of "construction without an Israeli permit".
- Occupying forces detained 30 Palestinians and summoned 5 others from the West Bank.
- Occupying forces demolished the house of Khalil Ali, in Shuwekeh, on the outskirts of the city of Tulkarm in the West Bank, under the pretext of "construction without an Israeli permit".
- Two Palestinian teenagers, Labib Khaldoon Anwar Azzam (age 17) and Mohammed Hisham Ali Zaghlawan (age 17), were killed by occupying forces near the illegal settlement of "Eli" south of Nablus.

In addition to the above, we must highlight that Palestinian children continue to be arrested and detained by Israeli occupying forces on a near-daily basis and are being subjected to harsh and cruel treatment, including beatings, forced interrogations and even torture, causing physical and psychological trauma to these innocent children and to their families. Just one example of this took place on Tuesday, 1 March 2016, when Israeli occupying forces dressed in full army gear with only their eyes uncovered broke into a Palestinian home in the Occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Issawiya at 2.00 in the morning. The occupying forces violently forced themselves into the home to arrest a young boy, age 16, for alleged stone throwing. The soldiers forcibly woke the entire family up in a state of fear and proceeded to throw the 16-year-old boy to the ground, leaving him handcuffed for three hours. His father and mother, who were trying to prevent the occupying forces from taking their young son, were hit and also shoved to the floor, and the 2-year-old little brother even suffered from pepper spray to his eyes before he too was taken with the parents into captivity and detained for nearly four hours.

On this same topic, it should be noted that on Wednesday, 2 March 2016, a Palestinian boy, Jihad al-Jaabari, age 14, from Jerusalem was sentenced by the occupying Power to 18 months in prison for allegedly throwing stones. The occupying Power, with its scare tactics and harsh and unjustified sentencing of young children, along with its sheer brutality against Palestinian children, must be firmly condemned for such illegal and cruel treatment of children in violation of all international and moral norms. There are currently approximately 450 Palestinian children detained in Israeli jails. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international legal standards are clear when it comes to the issue of imprisonment and detentions of children in that the arrest, detention and imprisonment of a child should only be used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest period of time, not in the systematic, gross manner used by Israel against Palestinian children under this belligerent, illegal military occupation that has been torturing and brutalizing Palestinians for nearly a half century, scarring generation after generation.

In this regard and in the context of the overall issue of detentions and imprisonment of Palestinians by the occupying forces, we draw your attention to the fact that in February 2016 alone at least 616 Palestinians, including 140 children and 18 women, were arrested or detained by the occupying Power. That adds to the